



## Leg and Drain Bag Catheters

### MU Patient Education Series

#### **Definition:**

Leg bags and drain bags are attached to indwelling or external catheters and are used for continuous urinary collection.

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#### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

##### **When should I use a leg bag versus a drain bag?**

- Drain bags can be used during the night only or throughout the whole day and night. Leg bags can only be worn during the day—you must wear a drain bag overnight.

##### **Does a leg bag require extension tubing?**

- You will likely find that tubing extension is essential for comfort and proper placement of the leg bag. The bag can be positioned on either the thigh or calf. You can cut the extension tubing to the length that is best for you, and then attach the leg bag.

##### **How do I know what size leg bag to choose?**

- Your leg bag size will depend on personal preference, how much fluid intake and output you have, and how often you can empty the bag. Some people prefer a smaller bag because it is more discreet; others prefer a larger bag because it has a larger capacity. Whichever leg bag you select, you should empty it when it gets about half full.

##### **Where should I position the leg bag?**

- This depends on personal preference:
  - Thigh: Placing the bag on the thigh hides the use of the leg bag, but it has been proven difficult to keep in place.
  - Calf: Placement on the calf can be more secure, but it requires longer extension tubing which can get in the way of activities of daily living.



### Where should I position the drain bag for overnight use?

- Place the bag below bladder level, ensuring that it does not lie on the floor. This keeps urine from flowing back into your bladder. Leave enough slack in the tubing to allow some freedom of movement so that the bag does not tug on the catheter.

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

What you will need:

- Catheter—the size and type recommended by your healthcare provider
- Soap and water
- Leg bag or drain bag
- Extension tubing
- Scissors
- Pre-soaked alcohol pad or isopropyl alcohol and gauze or cloth

### Leg Bag:

**Step 1:** Wash your hands with soap and water.

**Step 2:** Position the bag where it is most comfortable. The protective cap should be closest to you, and the outlet valve away from you. Wrap the top strap around the leg and secure, and then to the same with the bottom strap.

- Be careful! Do NOT secure the straps too tightly, or they may be uncomfortable, cause sores or clots, or not allow proper circulation

**Step 3:** Estimate the length of extension tubing needed:

- With the hard plastic connector end facing toward you and the catheter, put the tube in the approximate position it is to be connected
- Make sure the tubing is short enough to prevent kinking but long enough to prevent pull on the catheter

**Step 4:** Cut tubing—the end WITHOUT the hard plastic connector—with scissors cleaned with isopropyl alcohol.

**Step 5:** Remove the protective cap from the leg bag connector. Check the drainage spout to make sure it is closed.



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**Step 6:** with an alcohol-saturated pad or material, clean the cut end of the tubing and the top connector on the leg bag. Attach the tubing to the leg bag connector.

**Step 7:** with another alcohol-saturated pad or material, clean the connector end of the tubing, and the end of the catheter. Attach the catheter to the tubing connector.

**Step 8:** Adjust straps or bag position as needed.

**Step 9:** Discard any packaging, alcohol pads, etc.

**Step 10:** Wash your hands with soap and water.

#### **Drain Bag (Overnight Bag):**

**Step 1:** Wash hands with soap and water.

**Step 2:** Remove protective cap from the drain bag. Check the drainage spout to make sure it is closed.

**Step 3:** with an alcohol-saturated pad or material, clean the connector end of the tubing, and the end of the catheter. Attach the catheter to the drain bag tubing connector.

**Step 4:** Discard any packaging, alcohol pads, etc.

**Step 5:** Wash your hands with soap and water.

#### **Emptying Your Bag:**

Empty your bag frequently in a clean bathroom, not allowing it to become more than about half full. Remember, as it fills up, it gets heavier and may tug on the catheter or become difficult to manage.

**Step 1:** Wash your hands with soap and water.

**Step 2:** Keep the bag below your bladder and empty it.

**Step 3:** Hold the bag over the toilet or container. Open the drainage spout at the bottom of the bag and empty the urine from the bag.

- Do not let the bag touch the rim of the toilet or container. With an alcohol-saturated pad or material, clean the drainage spout and close it tightly

**Step 4:** Wash your hands with soap and water.



### **Switching Your Drain Bag and Leg Bag:**

**Step 1:** You may want to use a catheter plug (for a Foley catheter) to keep the catheter from draining when changing the bags. Or you can place a towel underneath the catheter to collect and drips.

**Step 2:** when your leg bag or drain bag is not being used, cover the connector with its original protective cap.

**Step 3:** when attaching the catheter to either the leg bag or drain bag, always clean the connector and the catheter with alcohol.

**Step 4:** CLEAN your drain bag each morning as soon as possible once it is removed. CLEAN your leg bag each night as soon as possible once it is removed.

### **Cleaning Your Drain Bag and Leg Bag:**

- Mix cleaning solution
  - 2 parts white vinegar and 3 parts water
  - 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach and ½ cup of water
- Empty bag of urine, then close the drainage spout.
- Place tubing under the faucet, putting warm water into the bag.
- Swish it around for 10 seconds, and then empty it through the drainage spout. Close the spout.
- Pour cleaning solution into the bag. Put the protective cap on the connector.
- Swish solution around for 30 seconds, and then let it sit in the bag for 20 minutes. Empty through the drainage spout.
- Keep spout open and pointed down. Hang the bag to dry until switching bags again.
- Remember to close the spout when attaching it to the catheter.

*\*NOTE that the drain bag and leg bag, when switched daily, should last for approximately one month. Discard and replace bags earlier if they become discolored, brittle or if they smell even after cleaning.*

*If you are unsure how to clean, empty or attach your catheter bag, contact your medical professional.*

### **DISCLAIMER:**

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